

THE PRESIDENT'S STATE OF THE UNION ADDRESS AND SOCIAL SECURITY

THE SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. CULBERSON). Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Virginia (Mr. MORAN) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. MORAN of Virginia. Mr. Speaker, tonight is another historic opportunity for the President to give direction to this country through the State of the Union address. I know we will all be watching, and we will all be hoping that he provides the kind of direction that we need, both internationally and domestically.

Internationally he certainly deserves credit for the kind of turnout that was experienced in Iraq. It was at least equal to, if not more than, most people expected. He still needs to reassure us that there is a timetable for withdrawal from Iraq and that, in fact, he has plans to make this a safer world by dealing with truly critical situations in North Korea, in Russia in terms of its retreat to greater control of the economy and the society through a more repressive attitude. And particularly in light of the fact that there are still thousands of nuclear warheads in Russia, we need to make sure through programs such as the Nunn-Lugar bill that those nuclear warheads will never be accessible to terrorist groups.

There are a great many challenges internationally. Hopefully, he will rise to the occasion and provide leadership in the Israeli-Palestinian crisis, which is still the prism through which most Arabs and Muslims really throughout the world view our willingness and determination to provide balanced, just, and effective leadership in bringing about the kind of economic and social interdependence that will stabilize that part of the world and protect Israel from its enemies and enable Israel to continue to be a true democracy and, in fact, a model for the other regimes in that area in terms of full democratic participation.

These are all important objectives internationally, and we trust that the President will provide the kind of leadership we need, and I am confident that the Democrats will hold him fully accountable for the results in 4 years.

But we start out now with a President that has just been elected with a clear majority, something that did not happen 4 years ago. We need to work together. And what we are told on the domestic front is that the emphasis is going to be upon deficit reduction and primarily upon reforming the Social Security system. This is not where the emphasis needs to be in terms of the Social Security program.

Clearly, the budget deficit is in a crisis situation. We need leadership to lead us out of that crisis situation. We are currently spending 20 percent of the gross domestic product and bringing in only 16.8 percent in revenue. The President needs to show us where he is going to be able to come up with the

kind of revenue to match the spending. The President, we suspect, if past is prologue, is going to identify a number of domestic programs; but all told those domestic programs, if we would eliminate all of them with the exception of the defense budget, they do not equal the amount of the annual deficits. So we need some clear plans on how we are going to reduce this deficit, hopefully through a PAYGO plan that requires offsets against tax cuts as well as spending increases.

But I want to emphasize particularly the Social Security program. The President is going to suggest it is in crisis. Mr. Speaker, it is not in crisis. In fact, he needs to reassure the American people that there is plenty of money currently in the Social Security system to take us out at least to the year 2052, according to the Congressional Budget Office; and there is enough to provide 73 percent of the benefits for another 40-plus years.

Right now we have about \$1.7 trillion in reserves. That amount is going to go up by hundreds of billions each year so that we will have over \$4 trillion in reserves by 2015. By 2018 it starts to tip as my generation, the baby boom generation, starts to retire, and then we need to make some plans for the future. But let me suggest that the tax cuts that we have enacted in 2001 and 2003 total 2 percent of the gross domestic product. The Social Security system needs only 4/10 of 1 percent to cover the shortfall for the next 75 years. Even the taxes just on the top 1 percent are 6/10 of 1 percent more than we need to cover the Social Security shortfall.

That is where the emphasis needs to be. We trust that the President will provide that kind of leadership this evening.

ELECTION OF MEMBERS TO COMMITTEE ON THE BUDGET

Mr. PUTNAM. Mr. Speaker, I offer a resolution (H. Res. 64) and I ask unanimous consent for its immediate consideration in the House.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Clerk will report the resolution.

The Clerk read as follows:

H. RES. 64

Resolved, That the following Members be and are hereby elected to the following standing committee of the House of Representatives:

Committee on the Budget: Mr. Crenshaw to rank after Mr. Ryun of Kansas; Mr. Wicker to rank after Mr. Putman and Ms. Ros-Lehtinen to rank after Mr. Hensarling.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from Florida?

There was no objection.

The resolution was agreed to.

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

RECESS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 12(a) of rule I, the Chair

declares the House in recess subject to the call of the Chair.

Accordingly (at 3 o'clock and 41 minutes p.m.), the House stood in recess subject to the call of the Chair.

□ 1650

AFTER RECESS

The recess having expired, the House was called to order by the Speaker pro tempore (Mr. DREIER) at 4 o'clock and 50 minutes p.m.

ELECTION OF MEMBERS TO CERTAIN STANDING COMMITTEES OF THE HOUSE

Mr. CANTOR. Mr. Speaker, by direction of the Republican Conference, I offer a privileged resolution (H. Res. 65) and ask for its immediate consideration.

The Clerk read the resolution as follows:

H. RES. 65

Resolved, That the following Members be and are hereby elected to the following standing committee of the House of Representatives:

Committee on Standards of Official Conduct: Mr. Hastings of Washington, Chairman; Mrs. Biggert; Mr. Smith of Texas; Ms. Hart and Mr. Cole.

The resolution was agreed to.

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

ELECTION OF MEMBERS TO CERTAIN STANDING COMMITTEES OF THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Mr. CANTOR. Mr. Speaker, I offer a resolution (H. Res. 66) and ask unanimous consent for its immediate consideration.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Clerk will report the resolution.

The Clerk read as follows:

H. RES. 66

Resolved, That the following Members be and are hereby elected to the following standing committees of the House of Representatives:

Committee on Education and the Workforce: Mr. Souder to rank after Mr. Johnson of Texas.

Committee on Financial Services: Mr. Pearce to rank after Mr. Gerlach.

Committee on International Relations: Mr. Barrett of South Carolina to rank after Mr. Boozman.

Committee on Small Business: Ms. Shuster to rank after Mr. Akin; Mr. Bradley of New Hampshire to rank after Mrs. Musgrave and Mr. Keller to rank after Mr. McCotter.

Committee on Veterans' Affairs: Mr. Nunes to rank after Ms. Brown-Waite and Mr. Turner.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from Virginia?

There was no objection.

The resolution was agreed to.

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

RECESS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 12(a) of rule I, the Chair